## Cathy's Message

Hello everyone, I hope you are having an amazing week. Here at Szymanski Consulting, we are definitely having a great week. The weather has been beautiful, we work with amazing people and we have the best customers. How can our week not be great!

As you read through the newsletter I hope you find some useful information. If you have ideas for an article please let us know we are always looking for new articles and new educational material for us as well as you.

Please save **December 3rd** on your calendar. This is our **annual party**, there is more information about this in the newsletter.

We hope you have a great month and if there is anything we can do for you, please let me know.

Are you following us on Facebook? Please like our page at **www.facebook.com/szycom**

We hope you know how much we appreciate each and everyone of you. Take care and have the best day ever. Cathy & David.

## Facebook Tips & Tricks

One of the questions we have been asked is how to hide users, games, polls, etc.
It quickly gets annoying seeing posts, game invites etc. Hovering your mouse to the right of the post and clicking Hide button can hide any post. After pressing the button you'll have the option to hide that user or in the case of a Facebook applicant the option to hide that application from ever showing up on your profile.
To unhide someone or unblock an application click the Edit Options link in the bottom right corner of the news feed.
Keep your email and your cell phone clean by updating or eliminate Facebook notifications or keep more up to date by adding new notifications.

## Sticky Fingers

No matter who we speak with, they are concerned with security. It might be office security on your network, or identity theft. Security is a major concern in our world today.

Right now, extremely dangerous and well-funded cyber-crime rings in China, Russia and the Ukraine are using sophisticated software systems to hack into thousands of small businesses like yours to steal credit cards, client information, and swindle money directly out of your bank account. Some are even being funded by their own government to attack American businesses.

> **one in five small businesses have been victims of cybercrime**

If you don't think you're in danger because you're "small" and not a big target like a J.P. Morgan or Home Depot? **Think again.**

82,000 NEW malware threats are being released *every single day* and HALF of the cyber-attacks occurring are aimed at small businesses; you just don't hear about it because it's kept quiet for fear of attracting bad PR, lawsuits, data-breach fines and out of sheer *embarrassment*.

In fact, the National Cyber Security Alliance reports that one in five small businesses have been victims of cybercrime in the last year – and that number is *growing rapidly* as more businesses utilized cloud computing, mobile devices and store more information online. Quite simply, most small businesses are low-hanging fruit to hackers due to their lack of adequate security systems.

Here are Seven critical security measures your business must have in place to have any chance of fending off these criminals with their sticky fingers.

1. **Train employees** on security best practices. The #1 vulnerability for business networks is the employees using them. If they don't know how to spot infected e-mails or online scams, they could infect your entire network.

## The Lighter Side: IT Fun Facts

Some interesting and disturbing IT Facts that I have found.

1. The technology of a single Game Boy exceeds all the computing power that was used to put the first man on moon in 1969

2. A robotic fish created by researchers at NYU_Poly was left to interact with normal fish. It was accepted by them and soon guided them as a leader.

3. After noticing the wind rustling and turning the leaves on trees, French entrepreneur Jerome Michaud-Lariviere designed wind turbine trees that could provide clean energy for urban settings.

4. There's a 3D–printed cast that uses ultrasound to help heal bones 40% faster

5. On an average work day, a typist's fingers travel 12.6 miles

6. Alaska is the only state that can be typed on one row of keys on a "Querty" keyboard.

## Shiny New Gadget Of The Month

# The Amazon ECHO; Like SRI For Your Home
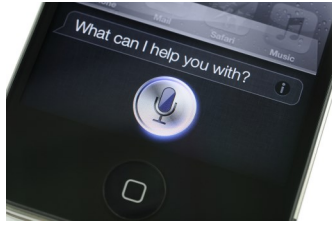
It's not Rosie the Robot, but your first voice request to Amazon's new Echo moves you one step closer to living like the Jetsons… Think of it as a plugged-in version of Apple's Siri or Microsoft's Cortana.

This "smart" speaker in a 9¼ x 3¼-inch cylinder can order products, turn off lights, set a timer, look up and give you sports scores, read you a book from Audible and more.

You might even get it to tell you terrible jokes…

It won't replace a high-end stereo, but its sound quality compares with any Bluetooth speaker, and it can fill a good-sized room in your home.

Bottom line: Echo offers hands-free, at-home audio access to just about anything on the web, with better sound than a smartphone or tablet.

All in all, it can make your life easier. And maybe just a little more fun.

If you already have WiFi, setup is a breeze. This gadget comes with a stand that lets you put it on any flat surface. It also sticks to metal objects or screws onto a regular camera tripod.

## SAVE THE DATE

**Szymanski's annual get together** is scheduled for **December 3**, 2015 at the Bayhawks Arena.

The game will begin at 7:10 PM, with gates opening at 6:00 PM. The Bayhawks will be taking on Iowa Energy. You will be getting your invitations soon. For now though we wanted you to save the date.

As always you and your family are invited to attend. We just need to know how many will attend so that we can have enough tickets, food and beverages.

As in the past we will have the sky boxes up top, to watch the game and enjoy each other's company. This is definitely a family oriented evening so we encourage you to plan on bringing your family with you.

We hope you will be able to make this fun enjoyable night out.

## Is IT adding to your business value?

We all know IT plays a valuable part in your company's operations, but is it possible to quantify that value? By asking your IT guy the right questions you should be able to get an idea of what they are adding, or subtracting, from your business's value. Whether your IT is handled in-house or through a Managed Services Provider, here is some advice on what you can do to help determine its value.

### Don't accept metrics

IT people love using metrics to show how they are contributing to your business. The problem is most of these metrics don't show you anything. Sure, high uptimes sound great and low mean-time resolutions are probably a good thing, but how do these impact your business? Don't arbitrarily accept these as signs IT is contributing to the value of your bottom line. Dig deeper and get an explanation as to why these metrics matter. There is a reason your IT department wants you to see these metrics, but it is important to have them explain it.

### Ban "tech speak"

There was a time in the world when it was impossible to avoid "tech speak", but that era has passed. Your modern-day IT person should be able to explain just about everything to you in plain English. Realistically, if they are doing a good job, they should want to share that information with you in a way you will understand easily. If you find your IT department relying heavily on "tech speak", chances are there is something they don't want you to know about.

### Make sure your IT provider understands business goals

If you want your IT working for you and adding value to your company, then those responsible for it have to know what your goals are. It is then, and only then, that they will be able to manage your technology with these goals in mind. Too often companies assume their IT provider knows what their priorities should be, founded on company principles, but the reality is that the contractor will operate on the basis of what it thinks is best. These two entities pulling in separate directions can hurt your business in many ways. By making sure your IT department - again, whether in-house or outsourced - is pulling in the same direction as everyone else, technology can add a whole lot of value to your company.

## Sticky Fingers

2. **Create an acceptable use policy** (AUP) and enforce it! An AIP outlines how employees are permitted to use company-owned PCs, devices, software, internet access and e-mail. Having this type of policy is critical if your employees are using their own devices to access company e-mail and data

3. **Require strong passwords** throughout your company. Passwords should be at least 8 characters and contain lower-case and uppercase letters, symbols and at least one number.

4. **Keep your network Up-To-Date.** New vulnerabilities are found almost daily on common software programs you use all the time; therefore it's critical you patch and update systems frequently.

5. **Have an excellent backup.** A quality backup can foil even the most aggressive ransomware attacks, where a hacker locks up your files and holds them ransom until you pay up,. IF your files are backed up, you don't 'have to pay to get your data back.

6. **Don't' allow employees to download unauthorized software**. One of the fastest ways to access your network is by embedding malicious code in seemingly harmless apps.

7. **Don't scrimp on a good firewall**. Your firewall is the frontline defense against hackers, so you need a really good one, with monitoring and maintenance done regularly.

## Gently Used Laptops For Sale

We have recently purchased new laptops for our team members.

So, we have several gently used laptops for sale. If you have noticed our team members laptops and were just a little bit envious. Then now is the time to purchase them at steep discounts with the remainder of the factory warranty. Contact Cathy@szy.com for more information.

## Is IT adding to your business value?

### Meet with your IT provider often

It doesn't matter if you have in-house IT or use a Managed Services Provider, you should be meeting with them on a regular basis to understand what they are doing. There is no need to banish them to some dark corner of the building, or only summon them when something breaks. By incorporating them into the operations process and maintaining open lines of communication, you are likely to see things in your office run a whole lot more smoothly. Not only will you get a better understanding of how IT is providing value to your business, they will gain a deeper appreciation of how your company operates. This will help both sides understand how the other operates, and enable you to find new ways to help each other.

### Listen to IT recommendations

Chances are that whoever is handling your IT has numerous different ideas on how your company can use technology to decrease costs, increase productivity, and become more profitable. You would be foolish to not at least consider what they have to say. One of your company's most valuable assets is technology, and your IT department should be up-to-date on what improvements can be made. There could be nothing more valuable to your company than an IT department proactively finding ways for you to get ahead of the competition using technology.

Is IT hurting your business value? Want to instead use it to drive increased bottom-line profits for your company? Contact our technology experts and find out how we can help.

## Roses for sale

The **Kiwanis Club of Erie** (which David and myself are members of) have a yearly fund-raiser that smells fantastic.
We sell long stemmed multi color roses for $18.00 a dozen. We deliver them boxed to your offices on October 22, 2015.
All money raised from the community stays in our community.

Some of the programs Kiwanis supports are:
- **Pennsylvania State Police Camp Cadet**
- **Early Childhood Learning**
- **Community Shelter Services**
- **Emmaus Soup Kitchen**

Kiwanis is also involved in Leadership programs in the schools. If you want more information you can visit **www.eriekiwanis.org**

Or you can always ask Cathy for more information. Szymanski Consulting is proud to have been a member of Kiwanis for over twenty years.

## Refer Our Services

We love having you as a customer and, quite honestly, wish we had more like you! So instead of just wishing, we've decided to hold a special "refer a friend" event during the month of July and August.   Simply refer any company with ten (10) or more computers to our office to receive a FREE Network Checkup (a $497 value). Once we've completed our initial  appointment with your referral, **we'll donate $100 to your favorite charity** for every referral that you've sent, as a small thank-you for thinking of us.
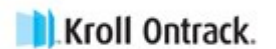
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